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PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' TENDENCY TO LEAVE THE PROFESSION

Sherwin P. Trazo[1i],
Jay Mar U. Peñas[2]
[1]Teacher III,
Santo Niño Elementary School,
Danao District, Division of Bohol,
Department of Education,
Philippines
[2]Teacher I,
Bagalnga Integrated School,
Compostela District, Division of Cebu,
Department of Education,
Philippines

Abstract:
Teachers are more than just professionals. They are the most important manpower in an educational system – in the past, in the present and in the future as well. However, presently, some teachers in the country are leaving the department seeking other opportunities. Thus, the study examined the potential causes and reasons of public school teachers resigning from DepED in the country. Particularly, the respondents of the study were from the Bohol Division and Cebu Province Division (N=178). After obtaining informed consent, the respondents were asked to assess their level of stress and self-efficacy using standardized tools. Quantitatively, to assess and identify the influence of these variables, the study utilized a binary logistic regression model. It was found out that respondents had experienced moderate stress levels while attaining a high degree of self-efficacy. Key findings disclosed that the years of service revealed a significant negative relationship between teachers leaving DepED; as years of service increase, the likelihood of leaving decreases (significant β, low SE, and significant p-value of the regression analysis). Further, the results of other predictors were thoroughly analyzed, and their implications were provided. The result of this study hopes to contribute to the understanding of the dynamics affecting teacher resignation and hopes to inform higher offices, thereby improving the teaching workforce in the country.

Keywords: teacher exodus predictors, self-efficacy, stress level, binary, logistic regression

[i] Correspondence: email main.15002062@cnu.edu.ph

1. Introduction

More than simply being educators, teachers play a vital role in our society. They are community builders and a molding force of the nation, with the power to nurture the young generation that will help shape society's future. Their social, cultural, and economic impact extends beyond the classroom, which reshapes the country. Nonetheless, despite their great regard in our society, educators still face challenges and difficulties while performing their tasks, which later lead to a possible teacher turnover. With this, it is the high regard of this study to possibly determine the predictors of this perennial problem of the department.

According to Preechawong *et al.* (2021), teacher turnover is a worldwide problem. It takes a lot of patience and effort to be a teacher. Additionally, administrators who may not fully understand or support teachers in their work, student misbehavior, shifting educational policies, a lack of support from colleagues, parental expectations, and workload - are just a few of the challenges that teachers must deal with. Also, the teachers' disinterest in continuing in their jobs may result in a teacher shortage. In connection to that, as cited by the Socioeconomic Research Portal for the Philippines, David *et al.* (2019) found that teachers in public schools frequently lack the administrative support and personnel to handle tasks, forcing them to perform administrative duties that detract from the quality of their instruction. These include taking part in different government programs like "*mass immunizations, community mapping, conditional cash transfer, deworming, feeding, population census, antidrug, and election, among others*," as well as "*paperwork on seminars and training they are tasked to attend and additional designations in line with student guidance, budget, disaster response, and health*." In other words, educators are expected to perform non-teaching related tasks in addition to instructing.

Moreover, for Aulia and Haerani (2023), a few factors that may have an impact on teacher retention and turnover are pay and benefits, working conditions, school culture, peer support, teacher-to-teacher collaboration, and individual and family circumstances. Similarly, according to a local study conducted by Cahilog, Arcilla, and Sarong (2023), teachers quit for a variety of reasons, such as low pay, delayed payment of salary, feeling underappreciated for their work, unfavorable student attitudes toward them, too much work and responsibilities, and low job satisfaction. Additionally, the results show that teachers' decisions to leave are influenced by both pragmatic and emotional factors. The desire for financial stability is the foremost among the concerns, but it is balanced by their strong emotional ties to the students and the community's educational system. The requirement for comprehensive health and well-being provisions, operational efficiency, professional development, and an inclusive work environment are additional noteworthy challenges. This highlights the urgent need for DepED reforms, with a focus on competitive pay, efficient operations, ongoing professional development, and comprehensive health benefits.

Despite the fact that teachers are the lifeblood of any educational system, they often face a variety of challenges that can be overwhelming and potentially harm their effectiveness and longevity in this profession. For instance, the primary cause of stress

for teachers is their perceived hazardous work environment. The best way to deal with stress is to face life with paradox and humor, which is how teachers came up with Cognitive Strategy (CS). Thus, it is recommended that the organization hold frequent sensitivity training sessions and expert spiritual consultations. The development of a Psycho-Social Program (PSP) with features on rewards and recognitions may place a strong emphasis on regular and periodic self-evaluations to lessen feelings of rage and other negative emotions (Alson, 2019). Additionally, teachers should also work on improving their efficacy because it is a strong indicator of how well they will teach. The sense of efficacy that teachers have is crucial because they have to believe in their own competence and ability to instruct and reach every student. Research has shown that the degree of interpersonal support that new teachers receive from school administrators, peers, parents, and the community at large, as well as the availability of instructional resources, influence their levels of self-efficacy (Withy, 2019). Additionally, as per Yu (2023), the teachers' salary increase is at the top of the list. It would not only help boost morale but also reestablish teaching as a profession, encouraging competitive young minds to pursue careers in teaching.

Furthermore, Caliba (2022) recommended that in order to provide better, if not the best, teaching and learning environments, school administrators may establish healthier school climates and improved system environments. Teachers would be more dedicated to raising student success. Through various lectures or seminars, the Teachers' Performance Paradigm Clock must be made known to all stakeholders, including the students. By familiarizing themselves with all of the roles that teachers play and the factors that impact their performance over time, they will be better able to comprehend the magnitude and difficulty of the responsibilities and challenges that teachers face both inside and outside of the classroom. Additionally, they will learn that all stakeholders play a part in the success of teachers in pedagogy, rather than just the teachers themselves.

Teachers can face many difficulties, but they can be overcome with the help of stakeholders and education professionals, as well as with the application of practical strategies. Teachers often face challenges related to classroom management, time management, differentiated instruction, and burnout. However, with the correct support system in place, these educators can thrive in their careers and serve as role models for future generations. Collaboration between education experts and interested parties is crucial to assisting educators and guaranteeing their professional success (DepED Tambayan, 2023).

Essentially, investigating the reasons why teachers choose to leave DepED is crucial as it gives policymakers and leaders in the education sector insight into the underlying factors that drive teachers to exit the system. Targeted interventions can be created to address problems and raise teacher retention rates by identifying these contributing factors. Understanding why teachers leave DepED can help in creating a supportive and conducive work environment for educators, which is in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals Number 8, wherein the promotion of those in unstable positions and the protection of labor rights are combined with safe and secure

working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, especially women migrants. Additionally, it advocates for the attainment of equitable compensation for work of equivalent worth, full and fruitful employment, and decent work for all genders, including youth and individuals with disabilities (United Nations Development Programme, n.d.). Schools may enhance teacher morale by addressing issues like workload compensation and professional development opportunities.

Further, it is imperative that research be done on the reasons why DepED teachers quit to increase teacher retention rates, improve the overall quality of education, and foster a more encouraging work environment for educators. Implicitly, Ulla (2018) suggested that it is beneficial to further develop studies concerning the challenges of teachers which may be conducted in the Philippines and the ASEAN region. By addressing the predictors that lead to teacher turnover, schools can work toward developing a robust and long-lasting teaching workforce in this country in the future. Finally, the results of the study may also be used as a basis or reference for future research.

2. Methodology

This section discussed the different means and methods by which the study was conducted. Since a quantitative research design was employed, the study utilized an electronic questionnaire as the primary data collection tool to gather quantitative data from the respondents. Moreover, the said electronic questionnaire was used to: a) gather the demographic profile, b) assess the stress level, and c) measure the general self-efficacy of the respondents.

2.1 Respondents

The respondents of this study were the resigned public school teachers and those who are still in the service but secretly planning to resign from the profession. The teachers were from different Divisions, specifically from DepED Bohol and Cebu Province, so cluster sampling was used. Furthermore, consent was obtained from the respondents before letting them complete the electronic research questionnaire.

According to van Smeden *et al.* (2018), the sample size for logistic regression analysis is commonly expressed in terms of events per variable (EPV) or the ratio of the number of events. Also, Concato *et al.* (1995) stated that the use of EPV of 10 is acceptable and appropriate for logistic regression. Furthermore, this study used the simple formula $n = 100 + xi$ (x is an integer, and i represents the number of independent variables) introduced by Bujang *et al.* (2018) to determine the sample size. Using the given formula with EPV of 10 and 7 independent variables, the study was suggested to have at least 170 respondents, but there were 178 who gave their responses, which was 8 more than the suggested respondents.

2.2 Instrument

Primarily, the instrument used in this study is a research questionnaire to gather the data needed. It was a modified electronic questionnaire by the researchers that consisted of different parts. The first part was the informed consent which affirmed the respondents' agreement to willingly participate in the study. The next part is the demographic profile of the respondents. It helped to categorize the respondents according to their distinct attributes or qualities such as age, gender, educational attainment, number of years teaching, and performance rating.

The last two parts are fully adapted standardized instruments: the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE). The PSS is a classic stress assessment instrument. Despite being originally developed in 1983, this tool remains a popular choice for helping us understand how different situations affect our feelings and our perceived stress (Du *et al.*, 2023), and Liu *et al.* (2020) advised to employ PSS-10 for it has been found out to have superior psychometric properties. Moreover, the GSE is a tool with an internal reliability between 0.76 and 0.90 of Cronbach's alphas. It is used to measure self-efficacy which is correlated to emotion, optimism, and work satisfaction of an individual.

2.3 Data Gathering Procedures

First, the researchers secured the approval of the committee to conduct the study. This includes the approval of the working topic, approved research proposal, and reviewed research instruments. Afterwards, informed consent was obtained from the respondents. Consent was obtained from them with an issuance that their names were kept confidential in adherence to the Research Ethics and Data Privacy Act of 2012. The electronic research questionnaire (in a Google Form) was then sent to the respondents after the approval of the study and after they had acquired their informed consent. Included in the questionnaire are the general instructions, research information, the demographic profile of the respondents, and the fully adapted PSS and GSE instruments.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis differed based on the questions. The stress level and self-efficacy were analyzed using the weighted mean of all the items. Descriptive statistics analysis was used to show the frequency distribution by using tables while a binary logistic regression model was used in order to assess and identify the influence of variables on teachers at risk of leaving DepED.

Quantitatively, for the stress level it was analyzed by adding up the scores of each respondent. Individual scores on the PSS can range from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher perceived stress. Scores ranging from 0-13 would be considered low stress. Scores ranging from 14-26 would be considered moderate stress. Scores ranging from 27-40 would be considered high-perceived stress. On the other hand, for self-efficacy, the total score was calculated by finding the sum of all the items. For the GSE, the total score ranges between 10 and 40, with a higher score indicating more self-efficacy. Moreover, SSPS is the statistical tool utilized in the regression analysis of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

The presentation was arranged based on the problems presented in the introduction. This was done in order to present the findings systematically, as well as analyze and interpret the results. The data are presented in tabular forms and are discussed thoroughly.

The stress level as perceived by both DepED teachers and resigned teachers, as well as their general self-efficacy, are presented below. The data collected was the result of the questionnaire given to the respondents. All data are shown in tabular forms and explained in detail.

Table 1: Stress Level of Former and Public-School Teachers

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. …been upset	2.63	Moderate Stress
2. …unable to control	2.12	Low Stress
3. …felt nervous	2.56	Moderate Stress
4. …felt confident	1.65	Low Stress
5. …things were going my way	2.50	Moderate Stress
6. …could not cope	2.32	Moderate Stress
7. …able to control irritations	2.43	Moderate Stress
8. …top on things	2.37	Moderate Stress
9. …been angered	2.45	Moderate Stress
10. …difficulties were piling up	2.33	Moderate Stress
Composite Mean	**2.33**	**Moderate Stress**

Legend: 3.41-4.00 – Very High, 2.81-3.40 – High, 2.21-2.80 – Moderate, 1.61-2.20 – Low, 1.01-1.60 – Very Low

Table 1 shows the stress level of public school teachers and resigned teachers. The composite mean is 2.33, which implies that public school teachers and resigned teachers are moderately stressed. In the past month, they often have been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly and often felt nervous and stressed. Stress is one of the top reasons why public school teachers leave the profession (Diliberti *et al.*, 2021).

Moreover, teachers experiencing moderate stress levels of being upset, nervous and stressed significantly indicate that they may find it reasonably challenging to maintain effectiveness and efficiency in work. These terms, in the form of self-doubts, if neglected or ignored, may lead to burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and, ultimately, the decision to resign. Also, this may potentially impair their decision-making ability to handle unexpected disruptions or provide solutions critical to managing diverse classroom challenges.

On this note, Rosillo (2023) unveiled the great challenges of teachers who resigned from DepEd in a phenomenological study. An implication of the study was drawn that "*unlimited paperwork and overlapping workloads*" can contribute "*in stressful work that leads to resignation*". Clearly, this suggests that teachers need to manage their expectations, control their nervousness, and reduce stress by having coping stress mechanisms if they want to stay longer at work.

Table 2: Level of General Self-Efficacy

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. …solve difficult problems	3.19	High Self-Efficacy
2. …get what I want	2.61	Moderate Self-Efficacy
3. …stick to my aims and accomplish my goals	2.81	High Self-Efficacy
4. …deal efficiently with unexpected events	2.85	High Self-Efficacy
5. …handle unforeseen situations	2.99	High Self-Efficacy
6. …invest the necessary effort	3.26	High Self-Efficacy
7. …remain calm when facing difficulties	2.88	High Self-Efficacy
8. …can find several solutions	2.95	High Self-Efficacy
9. …can usually think of a solution	2.98	High Self-Efficacy
10. …handle whatever comes my way	2.95	High Self-Efficacy
Composite Mean	**2.95**	**High Self-Efficacy**

Legend: 3.41-4.00 – Very High, 2.81-3.40 – High, 2.21-2.80 – Moderate, 1.61-2.20 – Low, 1.01-1.60 – Very Low

Table 2 shows the level of self-efficacy of public school teachers and resigned teachers. The composite mean is 2.95, which indicates that public school teachers and resigned teachers have high self-efficacy. They can solve most problems if they invest the necessary effort and always manage to solve difficult problems if they try hard enough. Self-efficacy has a significant relationship with job satisfaction, and job satisfaction can lead public school teachers to stay in their profession (Türkoğlu *et al.*, 2017). Also, Zamir *et al.* (2017) argued that self-efficacy helps teachers improve their professionalism.

Significantly, teachers with high levels of self-efficacy in work could manage difficult problems if they tried hard enough to solve them. This could mean that these teachers have enhanced problem-solving abilities and are adept at tackling difficult issues encountered in work. Additionally, teachers with high levels of self-efficacy at work can solve most problems if they invest the necessary resources in the form of effort. This proactive view of approaching teachers' problems is a key component and can be a preventive measure to reduce the likelihood of resigning from work. Thereby, this may help support the assumption of the findings that self-efficacy and problem-solving skills have a significant relationship among elementary student-teachers in India (Premalathala, 2022).

Table 3: Demographic Profile

Demographics	Categories	f	%
Age	21-30	39	21.9
	31-40	109	61.2
	41-50	27	15.2
	51-60	3	1.7
Sex	Male	54	30.3
	Female	124	69.7
Educational Attainment	College Graduate	17	9.6
	Master's Degree Units	98	55.1
	Master's Degree Graduate	28	15.7
	Doctorate Degree Units	32	18.0
	Doctorate Degree Graduate	3	1.7
DepED Years	1-4	18	10.1
	5-9	95	53.4
	10-14	36	20.2
	15-19	15	8.4
	20-24	11	6.2
	25-29	2	1.1
	30-34	1	0.6
Latest Performance Rating	Satisfactory	3	1.7
	Very Satisfactory	139	78.1
	Outstanding	36	20.2

Table 3 shows the demographic profile of the respondents collected in the present study. As seen in the table, 109, representing 61.2% of the respondents, mainly ranged in age between 31 and 40. There were 124 female teachers, or 69.7% of the respondents, while 54 were males or 30.3% of the respondents. These respondents had an exceptional educational background. The majority, 98 of them or 55.1% of the respondents, had earned units in a master's program or course already, while only 3 or 1.7% of the respondents were full-fledged doctorate degree holders. Significantly, 95, representing 53.4% of respondents, and the majority had served the Department of Education for at least 5 years and a maximum of 9 years, while only 1 or 0.6% of the respondents served for at least 30 years. Lastly, 139 respondents, representing 78.1 % of the respondents, got a recent performance rating of *very satisfactory,* while 3 or 1.7% of the respondents only received a recent performance rating of *satisfactory.*

Table 4: Employment Status of the Respondents

Level of Employment Status	Frequency	Percent
Still in the Service	80	44.9
Resigned	98	55.1
Total	178	100.0

Table 4 shows the status of employment of the respondents (N=178) collected in the present study. As seen in the table, 80, representing 44.9% of respondents, were still in the service or were still working under the Department of Education, as acknowledged during the collection of data of the present study. On the other hand, 98, representing

55.1% of respondents or the majority, had already resigned from work under the Department of Education.

Table 5: Significant Relationship between the Profile, Stress and Efficacy Level and Employment Status

Variables	Value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	-0.052	0.492	Reject	Significant Relationship
Sex	-0.056	0.460	Failed to Reject	No Significant Relationship
Educational Attainment	0.023	0.762	Failed to Reject	No Significant Relationship
Years of Service	-0.115	0.126	Reject	Significant Relationship
Performance Rating	-.024	0.750	Reject	Significant Relationship
Stress Level	0.023	0.759	Failed to Reject	Significant Relationship
Self-Efficacy	0.074	0.326	Reject	Significant Relationship

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6: Predictors

Predictors	β	S.E.	Wald	df	p-value	e^{β}
Age	-0.370	0.351	1.110	1	.292	1.448
Gender	-0.096	0.343	0.078	1	.780	.909
Educational Attainment	0.025	0.165	0.022	1	.036	.641
Years of Service	-0.444	0.212	4.388	1	.014	2.405
Performance Rating	0.117	0.336	0.103	1	.748	1.125
Stress Level	-0.220	0.516	0.181	1	.670	.803
Self- Efficacy	-0.488	1.000	0.238	1	.625	.614
Constant	0.041	2.119	0.000	1	0.985	1.075

Table 5 shows the significant relationship between the profile, stress efficacy level and employment status as variables in the study. As gleaned from the table, years of service is the only predictor with a statistically significant relationship with the outcome variable (p-value = 0.014). This means that after accounting for other factors, years of service significantly affect the outcome variable. The negative coefficient (-0.444) suggests that there is a negative relationship between years of service and the outcome variable. Age, Gender, Educational Attainment, Latest Performance Rating, Stress Level, and Self-Efficacy do not have statistically significant relationships with the outcome variable at the conventional alpha level of 0.05 (their p-values are all greater than 0.05). However, it is important to consider the research question and the specific context of the analysis to determine the importance of these relationships.

Below follows the comprehensive analysis of the results on each variable:

Age has a weak (r = -0.052) significant relationship in the correlation analysis with a p-value of 0.492. However, in the regression analysis, having moderate variability (SE = 0.351), it appears to have a weak negative relationship, and this relationship is not statistically significant (W = 1.110). Moreover, it has a β of -0.370, indicating that as age increases, the likelihood of leaving the profession slightly decreases. However, this predictor is not statistically significant in the regression model (p-value = 0.292). The eβ value of 1.448 suggests that for each unit increase in age, the odds of leaving the profession increase, but again, this is not a significant finding. This implies that while age might have some correlation with leaving DepED, it is not a strong or reliable predictor when other factors are considered.

For gender, the correlation analysis shows no significant relationship (r = -0.056; p-value = 0.460). Similarly, the regression analysis reveals a β of -0.096, indicating a very slight negative effect, but this is not significant (W 0.078; = p-value = 0.780) having an SE of 0.343 (moderate variability). The eβ of .909 suggests a decrease in the odds of leaving the profession for one gender over the other. However, this finding is not significant. Thus, sex does not significantly impact the likelihood of teachers leaving DepED.

While the correlation analysis for educational attainment shows no significant relationship (r = 0.023; p-value = 0.762), the regression analysis indicates a significant relationship (W = 0.022; p-value = 0.036). The β of 0.025 suggests a very slight positive effect of educational attainment on the likelihood of leaving the profession, having relatively low variability in the coefficient estimate (SE = 0.165). However, the eβ of 0.641 indicates that higher educational attainment is associated with a decrease in the odds of leaving DepED. This implies that higher educational attainment might provide teachers with more job satisfaction or better opportunities within the profession, reducing their likelihood of leaving.

Moreover, years of service have a significant negative (r = -0.115) correlation with leaving the profession (p-value = 0.126), and this relationship remains significant in the regression analysis (W = 4.388; p-value = 0.014). The β of -0.444 indicates that as years of service increase, the likelihood of leaving the profession decreases. The eβ of 2.405 suggests that each additional year of service increases the odds of leaving the profession, indicating that more experienced teachers are more likely to stay. The combination of a significant β, low SE (0.212), and significant p-value makes years of service a robust predictor of retention. This highlights the importance of addressing the needs and motivations of long-serving teachers to retain them in the profession.

For performance rating, the correlation analysis indicates a significant negative (r = -.024) relationship (p-value= 0.750). However, with a moderate variability in the coefficient estimate (SE = 0.336), the regression analysis shows that performance rating is not a significant predictor (W = 0.103; p-value = 0.748). The β of 0.117 suggests a very slight positive effect, and the eβ of 1.125 indicates an increase in the odds of leaving DepED with higher performance ratings. This finding implies that performance rating does not significantly influence the decision to leave, probably because high performers might leave DepED for better opportunities, corresponding to the effect.

For stress level, the correlation analysis indicates a significant correlation (r = 0.023; p-value = 0.759). However, stress level is not a significant predictor in the regression analysis (W = 0.181; p-value = 0.670). Having a high SE of 0.516, the β of -0.220 indicates a slight negative effect of stress on the likelihood of leaving DepED, while the eβ of .803 suggests a decrease in the odds of leaving with higher stress levels. This contradicting result might indicate that while stress is correlated with leaving, other factors mitigate its impact when considering the overall decision to leave.

Lastly, self-efficacy has a significant correlation (r = 0.074; p-value = 0.326), but it is not a significant predictor in the regression model (W = 0.238; p-value = 0.625). The β of -0.488 indicates a moderate negative effect, suggesting that higher self-efficacy reduces the likelihood of leaving the profession. The eβ of .614 indicates a decrease in the odds of leaving with higher self-efficacy. Having a very high SE of 1.000 and a non-significant p-value implies that self-efficacy is not a reliable predictor in the sampled size. This suggests that teachers who feel more capable and confident are less likely to leave, accentuating the importance of teachers building their self-efficacy through professional development and support.

The results of the present study may add to the related and existing key findings about predictors of teachers to leave the profession: emphasis on teacher burnout as a significant contributor to teacher intention to leave the teaching profession, including job satisfaction in the context of Thai vocational sector (Preechawong *et al.*, 2021); stress as the most common reason for leaving common teaching even before pandemic (Diliberti *et al.*, 2021), and; the actual teaching workload of teachers in DepEd (David *et al.*, 2019) has been highlighted as a contributing factor. Further, this suggests that DepEd may consider comprehensive strategies to address layer-upon-layer issues on teacher leavers, that is, if one of the goals of the department is to increase retention of competent teachers and cultivate a healthy working environment (Rosillo, 2023; David *et al.*, 2019).

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that teachers (N=178) as participants of the study, with respect to the demographic profile (age, sex, educational attainment, years in service, and recent performance rating), had experienced moderate stress level while attaining a high degree of self-efficacy. After analyzing all variables, including stress level and self-efficacy, using SPSS, the years in service having a statistically significant relationship was only found to be a predictor of teachers' tendency to leave the Department of Education.

Furthermore, this finding may pose an influential challenge for the Department of Education in addressing this perennial issue, which may require the implementation of targeted retention strategies, specifically considering the unique needs and concerns of long-serving public school teachers. By leveraging teachers' self-efficacy, there may be a decreased likelihood of departure among less experienced teachers, while the department can work on fostering less stress and a more satisfied workforce.

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Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Authors
Sherwin P. Trazo is an Elementary School Teacher at the Department of Education in the Division of Bohol. He obtained his Bachelor of Elementary Education major in General Content from Holy Name University, Bohol, Philippines. and finished his Master of Arts in Education in English Language Teaching at Cebu Normal University, Cebu, Philippines. Mr. Trazo previously taught English to all levels to Koreans, Japanese, Taiwanese and Vietnamese foreign learners. He is a school-based English Coordinator where he researches new materials and recommends instructional materials to provide the most effective program for the learners. At present, he is pursuing a Doctor of Education in English Language Teaching.
Jay Mar U. Peñas is a licensed public school elementary teacher for five years. He is currently connected to Bagalnga Integrated School in the province of Cebu, where he spent years of his early education. He is handling English, Mathematics, *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao* (EsP) or Values Education, and Science subjects for Grade 5 students. He completed his degree in Master of Arts in Education major in English Language Teaching (MAEd-ELT) at Cebu Normal University in 2023 and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education in English Language Teaching (EdD-ELT) in the same university. As a commitment to advance knowledge and interest in research, he has high hopes for future publication of his article or journal that may contribute to the academic community while currently pursuing his studies.

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